

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 EB-07 INR-07 NSC-05
/047 W

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R 161440Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7658

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 4838

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, ROSALYNN)
SUBJECT: MRS. CARTER'S VISIT: THE PRESS IN VENEZUELA

REF: STATE 104923

THE VENEZUELAN PRESS IS PROBABLY THE FREEST IN AL
LATIN AMERICA, WITH PAPERS AND MAGAZINES INDEPENDENTLY
OWNED AND MANAGED AND WITH NO SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT
CENSORSHIP. THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF MANAGES TWO TELE-
VISION STATIONS BUT DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH THE OPERA-
TIONS OF THE COUNTRY'S OTHER TWO INDEPENDENTLY OWNED
TELEVISION NETWORKS.

WHILE VENEZUELA BOASTS A FREE PRESS, THIS IS NOT
TO SAY THAT IT SHARES THE SAME TRADITIONS AND STANDARDS
OF PROFESSIONALISM AS DOES THAT IN THE UNITED STATES
AND EUROPE. NEARLY ALL INTERNATIONAL NEWS IS FROM THE
MAJOR WIRE SERVICES, AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS ITSELF IS
GENERALLY DOWN-PLAYED TO MORE SENSATIONAL LOCAL STORIES
AS CRIME, POLITICAL SCANDS AND FOOD SCARCITIES WITHIN
VENEZUELA, ONLY ONE PAPER, THE MORNING DAILY EL
NACIONAL, HAS A FULL-TIME CORRESPONDENT BASED IN THE
UNITED STATES (AND THIS CORRESPONDENT WAS ONLY NAMED
IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR).

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VENEZUELA HAS NO TRADITION OF INVESTIGATIVE
REPORTING. THE TYPICAL "IN-DEPTH" BY-LINE REPORT IS
A RE-HASH OF STATEMENTS MADE BY GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN
ON THE SPECIFIC SUBJECT AT HAND. VENEZUELAN NEWS-
PAPERS ALSO DO NOT HAVE THE STANDARD "EDITORIAL"
FORMAT OF NEW AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS. HOWEVER, EACH
PAPER HAS REGULAR COLUMNISTS WHO WRITE EDITORIAL COM-

MENTARY ON THE FULL ARRAY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. RECENTLY, THE MORNING NEWSPAPER EL UNIVERSAL RAN TWO MOST UNUSUAL FRONTPAGE EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES BY THE PAPER'S FOUNDER, TEOFILO NUNEZ, CRITICIZING PRESIDENT PEREZ' STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE CONCEPT OF A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND AND A RETURN TO THE PRE-1967 WAR BORDERS FOR ISRAEL.

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINES RESUMEN AND SEMANA, THE COUNTRY'S MAGAZINES GENERALLY ARE NOT CONCERNED WITH INTERNATIONAL NEWS OR POLITICS. RESUMEN AND SEMANA BOTH HAVE A TIME/NEWSWEEK FORMAT AND BOTH PROFESS TO BE "INTELLECTUAL". HOWEVER, AS WITH THE NEWSPAPERS, MOST SO-CALLED "IN-DEPTH" REPORTS GENERALLY CONSIST OF EITHER EDITORIALIZING OR PARAPHRASING OF STATEMENTS OF VARIOUS OFFICIALS, RATHER THAN TRUE INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING. RESUMEN IS THE MORE LIBERAL MAGAZINE, WHILE SEMANA IS POPULARLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE MORE CONSERVATIVE COPEI POLITICAL PARTY. OTHER MAGAZINES ARE AIMED AT MASS AUDIENCES AND ARE GENERALLY ON THE LINES OF SUCH AMERICAN MAGAZINES AS GOOD HOUSEKEEPING AND VOGUE. THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE ZETA, RUN BY CUBAN EXILE RAFAEL POLEO, REPRESENTS THE FAR RIGHT OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM.

THERE IS ONLY ONE REGULAR COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLICATION IN VENEZUELA, THE WEEKLY TABLOID "TRIBUNA POPULAR." THE LEFTIST-LEANING INTERPRESS WIRE SERCIE ALSO HAS A CONFIDENTIAL

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FULL-TIME OFFICE IN CARACAS.

NEWSPAPERS:

EL NACIONAL, THE "NEW YORK TIMES" OF VENEZUELA; MORNING DAILY; CIRCULATION 140,000.

EL UNIVERSAL, "THE BUSINESSMAN'S NEWSPAPER" OF VENEZUELA; MORNING DAILY; CIRCULATION 80,000.

ULTIMAS NOTICIAS, THE "NEW YORK DAILY NEWS" OF VENEZUELA; MORNING TABLOID; CIRCULATION 141,000.

EL MUNDO, SIMILAR TO ULTIMAS NOTICIAS IN FORMAT AND SLATN; AFTERNOON DAILY; CIRCULATION 110,000.

2001, SENSATIONALIST AFTERNOON DAILY; CIRCULATION 30,000.

MAGAZINES:

BOHEMIA, WEEKLY GENERAL INTEREST MAGAZINE WITH
EXTENSIVE PHOTO STORIES; CIRCULATION 60,000.

RESUMEN, LIBERAL WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE, WIDELY
REGARDED AS THE MOST "INTELLECTUAL" MAGAZINE
IN THE COUNTRY; CIRCULATION 10,000.

MOMENTO, WEEKLY WITH SAME FORMAT AS BOHEMIA;
CIRCULATION 40,000.

ELITE, WEEKLY, SAME FORMAT AS BOHEMIA; CIRCULATION
65,000.

SEMANA, WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE WITH CONSERVATIVE
EDITORIAL SLANT; CIRCULATION 10,000.
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ZETA, WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE WITH EXTREME RIGHTIST
POLITICAL BENT; CIRCULATION 5,000.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Concepts: n/a
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770174-0293
Format: TEL
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770554/aaaabuqo.tel
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 104923
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2510127
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MRS. CARTER'S VISIT: THE PRESS IN VENEZUELA
TAGS: OVIP, (CARTER, ROSALYNN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/612c4693-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009